**Technical Specifications**

**Grape marc spirit from the Vinho Verde region**

Language in which the application is submitted: Portuguese (PT)

1. **Name of geographical indication to be registered**

‘Aguardente Bagaceira de Vinho Verde’ [Grape marc spirit from the Vinho Verde region]

1. **Category of the spirit drink**

Grape marc spirit

1. **Applicant:**

Vinho Verde Regional Wine Committee

Legal Status: Cross-industry association governed by private law

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1. **National and EU Protection**

Primary Protection in Portugal: Decree-Law Nº 39/84 of 2 February 1984

Primary Protection in the European Union: Regulation No 1576/1989 of 29 May 1989

1. **Description of the spirit drink**

**Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics**

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ has to have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume equal to or greater than 40 % vol. The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ must be clear in appearance.

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ must be colourless or between yellowish and topaz in colour. The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira’ distilled from Old, Reserve, Very Old, VSOP and XO Vinho Verde must between yellowish and topaz in colour.

**Organoleptic characteristics:**

The minimum requirements of ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ in terms of aroma are as follows: there must be no obvious defect, it must reveal the raw material it was made from (grape marc), it must be of sufficient quality (a mark equal to 5) and it must be true to type (mark equal to 5), in accordance with the quality and typicity scales referred to in Figures 1 and 2 respectively.

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ bearing an indication of its sub-region or variety must satisfy the requirements for ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’, state the variety used and have a grading of six or above, in accordance with the quality scale given in Figure 1.

The aged ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ (Old, Reserve, Very Old, VSOP and XO) must satisfy the requirements for ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ and give off an aroma characteristic of ageing.

**Specific characteristics** (in comparison with spirit drinks in the same category)

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is intense and elegant, with a distinctive freshness of aroma and taste which it owes to the characteristics, themselves unique, of the grape marc from which it is made. The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is produced by distillation of grape marcs from the region.

**Type of oenological practice:** **Cultivation practices**

Considering that the grape marc used for the production of ‘Aguardente Bagaceira’ comes from the grapes from the region, the link with the geographical region (human and natural factors) is the same as that which characterises the region; these grape marcs are derived from vines characterised by their great expanse of vegetative growth and the fact that they are trained using various systems, which contributes to the freshness, aromatic intensity and other organoleptic characteristics of the white, red and rosé wines, which their distillation gives the ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’.

1. **Geographical area concerned**

The geographical area in which the ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is produced comprises the following administrative divisions:

a) All the municipalities in the districts of Braga and Viana do Castelo;

b) In the Aveiro district, the municipalities of Arouca, Castelo de Paiva and Vale de Cambra and the parish of Ossela, in the municipality of Oliveira de Azeméis;

c) In the Oporto district, the municipalities of Amarante, Baião, Felgueiras, Gondomar, Lousada, Maia, Marco de Canaveses, Matosinhos, Paços de Ferreira, Paredes, Penafiel, Póvoa do Varzim, Santo Tirso, Trofa, Valongo and Vila do Conde;

d) In the Vila Real district, the municipalities of Mondim de Basto and Ribeira de Pena;

e) In the Viseu district, the municipalities of Cinfães and Resende, except for the parish of Barrô.

**Map of the Vinho Verde region**

1. **Method for obtaining the spirit drink**

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is obtained by distilling fermented marcs from grapes from the region.

The distillation of grape marcs intended for making ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ must be carried out no later than the January following vinification.

The certifying body may lay down special rules relating to the conditions under which, and the place where, the oenological practices and treatments are carried out; in any event, in the case of the ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’, this must be the geographical area of production.

1. **Link with the geographical environment or origin**

**Details of the geographical area or origin relevant to the link**

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is obtained by distillation of fermented grape marcs and the link to the geographical area (human and natural factors) is the same as that for the products of the region.

The grapes from which the marcs are produced are heavily influenced by the mountainous character of the area and the way the river network is organised, a feature accentuated by the orientation of the main river valleys, which run from east to west and make it easy for the winds from the sea to penetrate.

The most marked aspect is the annual pattern of rainfall, with fairly high annual totals (1200 mm on average) and irregular distribution across the year, with most rain falling in winter and spring. Temperature, meanwhile, changes in tandem with precipitation, in other words the highest temperatures coincide with the lowest levels of rainfall and the lowest temperatures with the highest levels of rainfall. As regards the average annual temperature and the average maxima and minima, they can be described as not being excessive, which means that the climate is a mild one.

As for the relief of the terrain, the topography of the region is fairly irregular, divided up as it is by a dense network of valleys associated with the river network, a feature which becomes more pronounced as it moves from the coastline to the interior.

From the geological point of view, soils are mostly of granite origin, while there are two narrow bands of schistous origin which cross the region from south-east to north-west, originating south of the river Douro, one from the Silurian period, displaying carboniferous and slate formations, and the other consisting of schist from the archaic period.

As a general rule, the soil is shallow and heterogeneous, which makes it necessary to select the soils best suited to viticulture, such as soils of medium depth with good internal drainage and moderate acidity.

The Amarante sub-region, in the middle of the VVDR, is protected from the influence of the Atlantic and is at a high average altitude, which make for greater variations in temperature and hotter summers. The soil is granitic, as in most of the region.

This relief pattern, soil and climate dictate the character of the viticulture, which is one of very expansive vegetation and moderate planting density per hectare. The winegrowing plots earmarked for production of the grapes from which the grape marc is to be made lie in the river valleys and halfway up the hillsides, where the region’s vines are subjected to an Atlantic climate with higher rainfall and a milder climate so that, in a country with very hot summers, maturation is more moderate and aroma and acidity are balanced in a unique way in the white, red and rosé wines and sparkling wines.

The slow ripening of the grapes and the use, for the most part, of varieties which in this location have moderate sugar content and acidity levels have a positive effect on the profile of the grape marcs, which is fresher and fruitier, so that this marc, thanks to its moderately high level of acidity, keeps ideally and can be distilled and used as the basis for grape marc spirits which display their distinctive features of aroma and freshness.

**Human factors**

It was in the north-west, in the most populous heart of Portugal since the times of Asturias and León, that the dense population soon spread along the ridges of a very variegated landscape. From the 12th century onward there were many references to viticulture, which expanded through initiatives by religious corporations together with the decisive contribution made by the Crown. Viticulture was to remain in an incipient state up to the 12th to 13th centuries; population growth and economic expansion, the rising commercialisation of farming and the spread in the circulation of money contributed to the development of wine production, making wine into a major and vital source of income.

As a consequence of Portugal's accession to the European Community, 1985 saw the promulgation of the Demarcated Regions Framework Law, which was to reshape the organisational structure of the Committee for Viticulture in the Vinho Verde Region.

The characteristic feature of viticulture in the region is small-scale farms and high numbers of winegrowers, vines planted continuously or along borders and trained at medium or high level, with expansive vegetative growth and moderate to low planting density, giving the fermented grape marcs of the region a characteristic freshness owing to their gradual, slow maturation.

Aromas of fresh fruit and flowers stand out in the white marcs, aromas of red and yellow fruit in the rosés and equally young fruit aromas in the red marcs. Although the acidity gives them a capacity for ageing, the characteristics of the marcs are best defined by the more fresh mineral notes and their relationship with the Atlantic-influenced climate. The soil and the terrain of the region lend themselves to the culture of vines with a broad expanse of vegetation and moderate density, a marked difference in the production of grape marcs of this region.

**Specific characteristics of the spirit drink attributable to its geographical area**

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ must have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume equal to or greater than 40 % vol., be colourless or between yellowish and topaz in colour. The minimum requirements of ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ in terms of aroma are as follows: there must be no obvious defect, it must reveal the raw material it was made from (grape marc), it must be of sufficient quality (a mark of 5) and it must be true to type (mark of 5), in accordance with the quality and typicity scales. The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ bearing an indication of sub-region or variety must satisfy the requirements for ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’, state the variety used and have a mark of six or higher.

The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is intense and elegant, with a distinctive freshness of aroma and taste which it owe to the characteristics, themselves unique, of the fermented grape marcs from which it is made. The ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is produced by distillation of grape marcs; these grapes come from vines characterised by their great expanse of vegetative growth and the fact that they are trained using various systems, which helps bring about the freshness, aromatic intensity and other organoleptic characteristics which the grapes possess and transmit following distillation into ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’. Factors relating to growing practices, microclimates, vine populations and ways of training the vines have led to the division of the geographical growing area into nine sub-regions producing grapes which, because of their distinctive features, can be used to make marcs which in their turn, after fermentation and distillation, make it possible to produce spirits which reveal their qualitative characteristics associated with the varieties from which they are made.

Thus, the Amarante sub-region, protected as it is from the influence of the Atlantic, is at a high average altitude, so that temperature variations are greater and the summers are hotter, conditions which favour the development of certain varieties which mature later: Azal and Avesso (white) and Amaral and Espadeiro (red). The soil is granitic, as in most of the region. The grapes usually exhibit fruity aromas and a sugar concentration higher than the average for the region, as they benefit from the soil and climate conditions mentioned above, which make for good ripening of the grapes, particularly those of the Vinhão variety.

In the Ave sub-region, vines are planted more or less throughout the Ave river basin, in an area of rather irregular relief and at low altitude, which makes it more exposed to winds from the sea; the climate is characterised by low thermal variations and medium rainfall figures, so that this sub-region is above all a production area for grapes with a lively freshness and floral and citrus fruit notes. The Arinto and Loureiro varieties are found right across the sub-region, being suited to that type of mild climate owing to their intermediate ripening, neither early nor late, as is Trajadura which, by ripening early, is smoother.

The Baião sub-region is at the south-eastern edge of the Vinho Verde Region, at intermediate altitude, conditions which create a less temperate climate, with colder, less rainy winters and hotter, drier summer months; these characteristics induce the maturing of later-ripening varieties, for example Azal and Avesso (white) and Amaral (red), which have a greater need for heat at the end of the cycle.

The Basto sub-region is the furthest inland, situated at a high median altitude, which makes it better shielded from winds from the sea; the climate is harsher, with cold, very rainy winters (together with the Lima valley, it is where it rains most in the whole region) and fairly hot, dry summers, which favour late-ripening varieties like Azal (white), Espadeiro and Rabo-de-Anho (red).

In the Cávado sub-region, vines are found more or less throughout the hydrographic basin of the river which gives it its name, fairly exposed to winds from the sea, in an area of irregular relief and at low altitude, factors which mean the climate is mild, without wide variations in temperature and with intermediate median annual rainfall; in addition to granitic soils, there is a band of soils of schistous origin, though it is not very extensive. This climate is suited to the production of white grapes, especially of the Arinto, Loureiro and Trajadura varieties, which adapt perfectly to these conditions. They are grapes of moderate acidity with notes of citrus and pome fruit (ripe apples and pears).

In terms of temperature variations, the Lima sub-region is in an intermediate position in relation to the other sub-regions, although it is the one where the highest rainfall figures are recorded; the altitude where vines are planted is variable and increases as we move from the coastline to the interior, where the relief is also more irregular, giving rise to some microclimates within the Lima valley, and references are occasionally found to lower Lima and upper Lima. As in the Cávado sub-region, as well as granite soils, there is a band of soils of schistous origin, though it is not very extensive. The grapes are mainly of the Loureiro variety. Aromas are fine and elegant and range from citrus (lemon) to floral (rose). The Arinto and Trajadura varieties are also widespread in this location as they adapt well to mild climates influenced by sea winds. The red grapes are, in the main, of the Vinhão and Borraçal varieties.

The Monção and Melgaço sub-region has a very specific microclimate, being the only place where the Alvarinho (white) and Pedral (red) varieties are planted, and it shares with the Baião Sub-Region a recommendation for Alvarelhão (red), all three being early-ripening varieties. The soils in this sub-region are of granitic origin, with bands of pebbles in some places. This microclimate is characterised by cold winters with intermediate precipitation, while summers are fairly hot and dry, pointing to a limited degree of Atlantic influence. The Sub-region developed around the southern edge of the river Minho, in an area of hillside, which influences the production of the grapes of this sub-region.

The Paiva sub-region, like that of Lima, is in an intermediate position relative to the temperature variations and high summer temperatures recorded in the VVDR. However, it does not belong to the group of sub-regions with the highest rainfall levels, since it is not very exposed to the influence of the sea, but is at a higher altitude inland. This will be why the red varieties Amaral and, in particular, Vinhão, reach optimal states of ripening. The white are of the Arinto, Loureiro and Trajadura varieties, which are suited to temperate climates and are therefore common to practically the whole Region, though here they have an ally in the Avesso, a variety more typical of the inland sub-regions.

In the Sousa sub-region, the climate is mild, temperature variations are low, as is the number of days of fierce heat in summer. As regards rainfall, this too is below the average level. This can be regarded as a transitional sub-region, since it is not directly exposed to the influence of the Atlantic; that influence is, however, felt as the relief is not very accentuated. It is an inland area but without harsh winters and very hot summers. The recommended varieties are those typical of milder areas, Arinto, Loureiro and Trajadura, plus Azal and Avesso, which are more demanding in terms of ripening. The most common red grapes are of the Vinhão and Borraçal varieties which are spread across the whole VVDR, as well as the Amaral and Espadeiro varieties.

Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product or a particular quality, the reputation or other characteristics of the product

The characteristics of ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’, namely intensity and elegance with a distinctive freshness of aroma and taste, are associated with the grapes from which the marcs used for distillation are made. After distillation, the grape marcs give the spirit the specific characteristics of the varieties used, depending on the geographical area in which they are produced.

The vines from which these grapes are produced are characterised by their great expanse of vegetative growth and the fact that they are trained according to various systems, which helps bring about the freshness and other organoleptic characteristics displayed by the grape marcs. Vineyard distribution coincides with the river valleys, since that is where vineyards on hillsides show their full potential, coinciding with the places where groups of people have settled over the centuries, working and adapting the vineyards according to the characteristics of the soil and climate, which has enabled them to develop and produce grape marcs of great freshness and a certain degree of natural acidity.

Among the most typical features of the landscape in north-western Portugal are the poles, the tall growing vines and the trellises which cover the roads and the grapevines intertwined with trees on the edges of fields; these traditional methods of training the grapevines make it possible to obtain marcs corresponding to the natural conditions in the region.

The establishment of vineyards in the VVDR currently requires special support structures. To ensure that the characteristics of these grapes are maintained, the most recent training systems have been designed to make vine cultivation easier and improve production conditions, without departing from traditional vine-growing principles. Some important characteristics of the grapes are defined when they are picked. It is therefore very important to establish, with the greatest accuracy that winegrowing technology can offer, the date for harvesting grapes to be used for making the region's grape marcs. The harvest date must be established with an eye to several factors, of which one of the most important is forecasting the alcohol (sugar concentration) and acidity levels, these being fundamental elements in the specific character of the grapes. It is well-known that, as the grape transforms its acids into sugars, acidity reduces and the probable alcohol content increases; each variety has its point of equilibrium and virtually every producer can determine what the most appropriate ratio is for the profile of the grape marcs they mean to produce in terms of bringing out these characteristics after distillation into ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’.

1. **Supplement to the geographical indication**

‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ can only be marketed and placed on the market in containers with a capacity of 1 litre or under, properly labelled and bearing a guarantee seal.

‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ with an indication of a sub-region is obtained from grapes produced and vinified exclusively in each sub-region.

Although another type of container may be authorised subject to approval by a decision in favour by four-fifths of the votes of members of the general council, ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ can only be placed on the market in a glass container fitted with a non-recoverable sealing device, labelled and with product certification attested by the guarantee seal. ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ with the indication of a sub-region, the indication of a variety or quality designations may only be marketed in a glass bottle with a maximum capacity of 70 cl.

Stills for ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ will be separate from those for other products and must be located in the relevant geographical areas of production, and the equipment and processes used in distillation will be better suited to the making of products intended for the production of ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’.

**Specific labelling rules**

The label on ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ has to comply with the statutory rules and those laid down by the certifying body, to which it shall be first submitted for approval.

Use of the Alvarinho variety indication on labelling is exclusive to ‘Aguardente Bagaceira da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ from the Monção and Melgaço sub-region and must be used in conjunction with the express indication of the sub-region and, where the label only indicates the Alvarinho variety, the product must have been made 100% from that variety.

1. **Contact Details:**
2. **Details of applicant**

Vinho Verde Regional Wine Committee

Legal Status: Cross-industry association governed by private law

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1. **Details of intermediary**

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1. **Details of interested parties**

Vinho Verde Regional Wine Committee

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1. **Details of competent control authority**

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1. **Details of control body**

Comissão de Viticultura da Região dos Vinhos Verdes [Vinho Verde Regional Wine Committee]

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